

The Tragedy of Hamlet

Of his true state.

Quee. Did he receiue you well?

Rof. Most like a gentleman.

Guy. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Rof. Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

Quee. Did you assay him to any pastime?

Rof. Maddam, it so fell out that certaine Players
We ore-raught on the way, of these we told him,
And there did seeme in him a kind of ioy
To heare of it: they are heere about the Court,
And as I thinke, they haue already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. Tis most true,

And he beseecht me to intreat your Maiesties
To heare and see the matter.

King. With all my heart,
And it doth much content me

To heare him so inclin'd.

Good gentlemen giue him a futher edge,
And driue his purpose into these delights.

Rof. We shall my Lord. *Exeunt Rof. & Gyl.*

King. Sweet *Gertrard*, leaue vs two,
For we haue closely sent for *Hamlet* hether,
That he as t'were by accident, may heere
Affront *Ophelia*; her father and my selfe,
Wee'le so bestow out selues, that seeing vnseene,
We may of their encounter franckely iudge,
And gather by him as he is behau'd,
If be th'affliction of his loue or no
That thus he suffers for.

Quee. I shall obey you.

And for my part *Ophelia*, I doe wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of *Hamlets* wildnes, so shall I hope your vertues
Will bring him to his wonted way againe,
To both your honours.

Ophe. Maddam, I wish it may.

Pol. *Ophelia* walke you heere: gracious so please you,

Prince of Denmarke.

We will bestow our selues; reade on this booke,
That show of such an exercise may collour
Your lowlinesse; we are oft too blame in this,
Tis too much proou'd, that with deuotions visage
And pious action, we doe sugar ore
The Diuell himselfe.

King. O tis too true,
How smart a lash that speech doth giue my conscience?
The harlots cheeke beautied with plastring art,
Is not more ougly to the thing that helps it,
Then is my deede to my most painted word:
O heauy burthen:

Enter Hamlet.

Pol. I heare him comming, with-draw my Lord.

Ham. To be, or not to be, that is the question,
Whether tis nobler in the minde to suffer
The slings and arrowes of outrageous fortune,
Or to take Armes against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end them: To die to sleepe
No more; and by a sleepe, to say we end
The hart-ake, and the thousand naturall shocks
That flesh is heire to; tis a consumation
Deuoutly to be wisht to die to sleepe,
To sleepe, perchance to dreame, t' there's the rub,
For in that sleepe of death what dreames may come?
When we haue shuffled off this mortall coyle
Must giue vs pause, there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would beare the whips and scornes of time,
Th'oppressors wrong, the proude mans contumely,
The pangs of office, and the lawes delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurnes
That patient merri of th'vnworthy takes,
When himselfe might his quiet as make
With a bare bodkin; who would fardels beare,
To grunt and sweat vnder a weary life?
But that the dread of something after death,
The vndiscover'd country, from whose borne